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## Viewing cable 09TEGUCIGALPA617, TFH01: WHO'S WHO OF THE HONDURAN COUP

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### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09TEGUCIGALPA617**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">09TEGUCIGALPA617</a>	<a href="#">2009-07-17 23:03</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Tegucigalpa</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.wikileaks.elfaro.net/es/201105/notas/4258/>

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0165  
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE 0725  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUMIAAA/USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L T E G U C I G A L P A 000617

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/16/2019  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [HO](#)  
SUBJECT: TFH01: WHO'S WHO OF THE HONDURAN COUP

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 594

- [¶B. TEGUCIGALPA 591 AND PREVIOUS](#)
- [¶C. TEGUCIGALPA 587](#)
- [¶D. TEGUCIGALPA 580](#)
- [¶E. TEGUCIGALPA 578](#)
- [¶F. TEGUCIGALPA 574](#)

Classified By: amb. Hugo Llorens, e.o. 12958 1.4(b) and (d)

[¶1. \(C\) Summary:](#) As the Zelaya and Micheletti teams prepare to engage for a second round of talks in Costa Rica July 18 on restoring the constitutional order in Honduras, the fate of any deal that may emerge from the talks will most likely be determined by a relatively small number of opinion-makers and power brokers in Honduras who are not part of either Zelaya's administration or Micheletti's de facto regime. This message profiles some of these figures and their potential roles in making or breaking a political agreement, using the color scheme laid out in ref B and previous. End Summary.

[¶2. \(C\) Carlos Flores:](#) President of Honduras 1998-2002 and elder statesman of the Liberal Party, Honduras's largest political party. Flores also publishes one of the country's major daily newspapers, "La Tribuna," which has been critical of Zelaya's presidency. Zelaya views him as a political rival and obstacle to his plans to transform the Liberal Party. Little happens in Honduran politics without Flores knowing about it. Still, he claims he had no advance knowledge of the June 28 coup, even though the decree and analysis that coup defenders cite as proof of Zelaya's intent to dissolve Congress and convene a constituent assembly following his constitutional reform opinion poll appeared the morning of the coup in "La Tribuna." Since the coup, Flores has quietly sought to promote dialogue among key players to resolve the political crisis. Since at it's heart the crisis is a feud within the Liberal Party, he is extremely well placed. His daughter, Lizzy Flores, is Vice President of Congress and rumored to have been uncomfortable with the way Zelaya's removal was rushed through Congress June 28.

Hue: pastel pink  
Stature: high  
Influence: high  
Role: crucial

[¶3. \(C\) Ricardo Maduro:](#) Zelaya's immediate predecessor as President of Honduras (2002-2006) and elder statesman of the National Party. Maduro is well respected among the White Team and within the Honduran and international business community. Maduro has sworn to the Ambassador that he had no foreknowledge of the June 28 coup. However, most of his party strongly supported Zelaya's removal, more so than the ruling Liberal Party, which is split over the issue. But Maduro is a man of considerable intellect and strategic vision who can be persuaded that a political compromise that restores the consitutional order is in Honduras's, and therefore the National Party's, best interest.

Hue: eggshell  
Stature: high  
Influence: high  
Role: potentially very helpful

[¶4. \(C\) Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez:](#) The Archbishop of Tegucigalpa has long been one of the most respected and beloved figures in Honduras, or at least he was until he publicly endorsed the coup and the Micheletti regime on live television July 4, causing him to be vilified by the Red Team. He has called for peace and reconciliation but also urged Zelaya to stay out of Honduras. In recent days, he has backed away somewhat from his earlier endorsement of the coup, we think under instructions from the Vatican. He told the Ambassador the evening of July 16 that he would support an agreement brokered that would allow President Zelaya to return to Honduras. His early support for the coup nonetheless undermined his credibility as a potential mediator. Still, his blessing for any agreement could sway significant numbers from both the Red and White camps.

Hue: almond  
Stature: high (but falling among reds)  
Influence: high  
Role: Potentially important as a ratifier

15. (C) Elvin Santos: The Liberal Party presidential nominee, Santos has a strong personal political interest in finding a resolution to the current crisis (ref A). He enjoyed a 10-point lead in polls over National Party candidate Pepe Lobo shortly before the coup. The first post-coup poll showed him trailing Lobo by five points: 41-36 percent. He has made a series of televised messages appealing for peace, reconciliation and dialogue while being careful to neither condemn nor endorse the coup. As Zelaya's former vice president who resigned to run to succeed him while distancing himself from Zelaya politically, Santos's interests are best served by moving quickly past the current crisis and shifting the Honduran political discussion away from Zelaya and Micheletti and onto the campaign to succeed them.

Hue: powder puff  
Stature: medium  
Influence: moderate  
Role: post-electoral hope

16. (C) Pepe Lobo: The National Party presidential nominee, Lobo has benefitted in the short term from the conflict within the Liberal Party. But his long term interests, as possibly the next president, require restoring legitimacy and removing Honduras from international pariah status. Like Santos, he has made televised messages calling for peace, reconciliation and dialogue. But he has been more supportive of the coup and the Micheletti regime.

Hue: Lilac  
Stature: medium  
Influence: moderate  
Role: potential spoiler or redeemer

17. (C) Arturo Corrales: Although part of Micheletti's negotiating team in San Jose (ref F), Corrales has not taken a position within the new regime and has thus preserved his ability to act as the consummate bipartisan dealmaker. A former presidential candidate for the small, centrist Christian Democrat Party, Corrales is known as the "oracle" of Honduran politics for his shrewd instincts and predictive power. He is also considered by some to be one of the three most important power-brokers in Honduran politics, along with former presidents Carlos Flores and Rafael Callejas

Hue: ivory-blush  
Stature: high  
Influence: igh  
Role: dealmaker

18. (C) Vilma Morales: Another member of Micheletti's negotiating team for the first round of talks in San Jose, Morales was Chief Justice of the Honduran Supreme Court 2002-2009. A National Party stalwart, she regularly feuded with Zelaya from the bench and has been one of the June 28 coup's most outspoken legal defenders. Although respected within Honduran legal circles, her legal judgment on the current crisis is clouded by her partisanship.

Hue: snowblind  
Stature: high  
Influence: low-medium  
Role: not likely helpful

19. (C) Luis Rubi: As Attorney General, he appears to have been directly involved in the decision to remove Zelaya, has defended the legality of the action since and has used the legal apparatus under his control to stifle dissent and intimidate/persecute members of Zelaya's team. The Attorney General is appointed through a consultative process to a five-year term and may not be removed at the pleasure of the President. His continued tenure may therefore need to be part of the negotiation, with Whites desiring that he stay in

place as a check on Zelaya and Zelaya demanding his resignation.

Hue: sunbleached  
Stature: medium-high  
Influence: high  
Role: might have to go

¶10. (C) Jorge Rivera Aviles: The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, he told the Ambassador that he was not involved in the coup and was unwilling to swear-in Micheletti on June 28. Others say he was a key coup plotter. Either way, he has publicly defended the legality of the coup, but we understand some other justices on the court consider it was illegal (ref E). He is constitutionally third in line of succession to the Presidency.

Hue: birch  
Stature: medium-high  
Influence: high  
Role: Could be key

¶11. (C) Edmundo Orellana: Former Foreign Minister then Defense Minister for Zelaya, resigned just before the coup when Zelaya fired defense chief Vasquez Velasquez for refusing to carry out the constitutional reform opinion poll in defiance of a court order. Also a Liberal Party member of Congress. Orellana is a lawyer and diplomat of center-left political views. He has been working behind the scenes with remnants of the deposed Zelaya cabinet to seek a negotiated, conditional return of Zelaya to power.

Hue: passionate pink  
Stature: medium  
Influence: moderate  
Role: potentially useful go-between

¶12. (C) Jose Azcona: Son of former President of the same name (1986-1990) Azcona is considered one of the rising generation of Liberal Party leaders and a possible future presidential candidate. He holds a second-tier leadership position in the Congress and is close to Micheletti. Nonetheless, he has expressed to us his disagreement with the coup and desire to help broker a deal on Zelaya's conditional return. But he has kept those views private so as not to burn his bridge with Micheletti.

Hue: fuschia  
Stature: medium  
Influence: medium  
Role: behind-the-scenes voice of reason

¶13. (C) Jaime Rosenthal: One of Honduras's most prominent media and industrial tycoons, Rosenthal has been a long-time power broker and financial backer of the Liberal Party. His son Yani was Minister of the Presidency during the first half of Zelaya's term. His newspaper, "Tiempo," has been the most sympathetic to Zelaya of the four major Honduran dailies and the most critical of the coup since June 28. His television stations have also taken a moderate line since the coup and been more willing to air anti-coup viewpoints.

Hue: peach  
Stature: medium-high  
Influence: high  
Role: Could be key to selling an agreement

¶14. (C) Jorge Canahuati: A rival/competitor of Rosenthal's, Canahuati's "El Herald" and "La Prensa" have been the most harshly anti-Zelaya and pro-coup. His publications frame the opinions of the National Party mainstream.

Hue: lily white  
Stature: medium-high  
Influence: high  
Role: possible obstruction

¶15. (C) The "Turcos": Refers to the small industrial and

financial elite, predominantly of Arab/Palestinian origin, who dominate the Honduran economy and have tremendous weight, usually exercised behind the scenes, on its politics. Prominent members include Miguel Facusse, his son-in-law Fredy Nasser, the Kafie Brothers and Camilo Atala. It is highly likely that at least some of them knew about the coup. These are the so-called "Power Groups" railed against by Zelaya and his leftist supporters.

Hue: alabaster  
Stature: medium  
Influence: high  
Role: will need to be coopted into any deal

¶16. (C) Doris Gutierrez: A member of Congress from the leftist Democratic Unification (UD) Party, Gutierrez is a leading voice of the democratic left, with the stress on "democratic." She has attacked corruption in the Zelaya administration but also the coup that removed him.

Hue: magenta  
Stature: low-medium  
Influence: low-medium  
Role: could bring some reds around to a deal

¶17. (C) Rafael Alegria: A militant advocate for small farmers (although disdained by many truly representative peasant organizations), Alegria is generally considered to be a Chavez proxy, if not actually on Chavez's payroll. He was constantly seen in Zelaya's presence in the final days before the coup, when Zelaya was threatening to push ahead with a constitutional reform opinion poll in defiance of a court order.

Hue: blood red  
Stature: low  
Influence: low  
Role: obstruction

¶18. (C) Cesar Ham: Presidential candidate for the leftist UD party, he was closely associated with Zelaya's final push for a constitutional reform opinion poll in defiance of a court order. He and some others in his party are now openly calling for violent insurrection to bring Zelaya back.

Hue: crimson  
Stature: low  
Influence: low-medium  
Role: potential wrecker  
LLORENS